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ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 USNW-00 DODE-00 DS-00
VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 LAB-01 VCE-00 NSAE-00 DSCC-00
DRL-02 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /003W
-----11F410 141109Z /38

FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9459
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
NSC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002398

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF, AF/S, AND AF/RA
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT
NSC FOR SENIOR DIRECTOR FRAZIER
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/09/06

TAGS: PREL PGOV ZI

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY COMMENTS ON ZIMBABWE

CLASSIFIED BY DCM REWHITEHEAD DUE TO 1.5 (B) AND (D).

11. (U) SUMMARY. AS A CONTINUATION OF INITIAL COURTESY
CALLS, DCM MET WITH SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTERPART THOMAS RAMBAU
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ON AUGUST 8. RAMBAU ECHOED THE PESSIMISM THAT SEEMS TO BE
THE ORDER OF THE DAY IN HIS COMMENTS ON ELECTIONS, CONSULAR
ISSUES, WAR VETERAN VISITORS, PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS,
AND DIPLOMATIC BANKING PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

ELECTORAL ICEBERGS AHEAD

12. (SBU) RAMBAU WAS NOT WELL INFORMED ON ANY POTENTIAL
SADC ELECTIONS MONITORING PROGRAM, BUT HE THOUGHT THAT IT
WAS POSSIBLE THAT SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT PROVIDE OBSERVERS
THROUGH SOME MECHANISM. HE AGREED THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S
QUIET DIPLOMACY HAT YIELDED FEW RESULTS THUS FAR AND
EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT MBEKI HAD SO FRANKLY ADMITTED THIS
DURING A BBC INTERVIEW EARLIER IN THE WEEK. HE SAID THAT
THE AIRING OF MBEKI'S COMMENTS ON ZNBC WAS EVEN MORE
SURPRISING. HE SURMISED THAT THE LACK OF TACTICAL EDITING
HAD BEEN AN OVERSIGHT AND SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT THE
PERSON RESPONSIBLE WAS IN THE CROSS-HAIRS OF INFORMATION
MINISTER MOYO.

CONSULAR HEADACHES

13. (C) RAMBAU RAISED THE ONGOING CONFLICT IN CHINHOYI,
OBSERVING THAT IT HAD LANDED PARTIALLY ON HIS DESK. FOUR
OF THE TWENTY-TWO COMMERCIAL FARMERS ARRESTED IN THE CASE
WERE BELIEVED TO HOLD SOUTH AFRICAN PASSPORTS. (SUBSEQUENT
REPORTS INDICATE THIS IS NOT CORRECT.) HE EXPLAINED THAT
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THIS WAS NOT AT ALL AN UNCOMMON OCCURRENCE. LARGE NUMBERS
OF WHITE ZIMBABWEANS HAD RESETTLED IN SOUTH AFRICA IN THE
EARLY 1980'S AND TAKEN UP SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZENSHIP. MANY
OF THESE HAD CHOSEN TO RETURN TO ZIMBABWE LATER TO RECLAIM
FAMILY FARMS AND BUSINESSES, OFTEN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAD RETAINED ZIMBABWEAN CITIZENSHIP. HE
DESCRIBED AN INCIDENT A WEEKEND EARLIER IN WHICH HE HAD
JUGGLED PHONE CALLS BETWEEN A SOUTH AFRICAN FARMER NEAR
MUTARE AND THE POLICE AS "WAR VETERANS" MOVED CLOSER TO THE
FARMER'S HOUSE FROM SURROUNDING BARRICADES. THE FARMER,
WHO PLEADED FOR SOUTH AFRICAN INTERCESSION, NONETHELESS
REFUSED TO LEAVE THE HOUSE UNLESS HIS ZIMBABWEAN BROTHER
ACCOMPANIED HIM. RAMBAU SAID THAT EVENTUALLY HE CONVINCED
THE POLICE TO ESCORT BOTH OFF THE PROPERTY.

A RESPECTABLE WAR VET

14. (SBU) DCM QUERIED RAMBAU ON PRESS REPORTS OF A SOUTH
AFRICAN WAR VETERAN LEADER WHO HAD COME TO ZIMBABWE TO MEET
WITH HIS ZIMBABWEAN COUNTERPARTS. RAMBAU SAID THAT HE HAD

MET WITH THE MAN AND POINTED OUT THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR VETERAN HAD PUBLICLY WAR VETERAN CONDEMNED VIOLENCE BECAUSE IT SULLIED THE RESPECTABILITY OF THE ENTIRE MOVEMENT. RAMBAU ADDED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN HAD CALLED FOR COMPULSORY LAND ACQUISITION IN SOUTH AFRICA AS WELL AND CALLED FOR A REGIONAL WAR VETERANS FRONT THAT INCLUDED MOZAMBIQUE, MALAWI, AND ZAMBIA. DCM POINTED OUT THAT THIS GOAL MIGHT PROVE ELUSIVE, GIVEN THAT TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE THERE ARE NO WAR VETERANS IN TWO OF THESE THREE COUNTRIES.

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COUNTRIES.

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION OK, STATE VISIT NOT

15. (C) RAMBAU SAID THAT PRESIDENT MBEKI, AT THE HIGH COMMISSION'S URGING, HAD NOT RESPONDED TO A RECENT INVITATION FROM MUGAVE FOR A STATE VISIT. RAMBAU SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS DID NOT WANT HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS TO BE MISINTERPRETED AS CONDONING GOZ POLICY. A SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION, HOWEVER, HAD JUST CONCLUDED A VISIT TO ZIMBABWE. MOST OF THE MEETINGS TOOK PLACE BETWEEN COMMITTEE COUNTERPARTS, BUT THERE HAD BEEN CONTACTS WITH GOZ MINISTERS. RAMBAU DESCRIBED THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN A DR. MOHOWAN (SP), WHO CHAIRS THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT'S HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, AND HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER NKOMO.

16. (C) RAMBAU SAID THAT HE WAS ASTONISHED AT THE APPROACH OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIAN, WHO TOLD NKOMO THAT HE HAD READ WITH INTEREST THE GOZ FAST TRACK REGULATIONS,

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P 141106Z AUG 01
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SINCE HE WAS INTERESTED IN A LITTLE FARM OF HIS OWN. HE THEN LAUGHED OUT LOUD AT NKOMO'S OBVIOUS DISCOMFITURE AND CONTINUED TO BAIT THE MINISTER ABOUT THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF CHANGING HIS ZIMBABWE DOLLARS BACK TO RAND WHEN HE RETURNED

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HOME, SINCE THE ZIMBABWE DOLLAR WAS NO LONGER A CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY. NKOMO REPLIED THAT THE GOZ WOULD TAKE STEPS ON THE MONETARY FRONT THAT "WOULD SHOCK" THE WORLD. RAMBAU SAID THAT HE QUAILED TO THINK WHAT THESE MIGHT BE AND ADDED THAT HE HAD BEEN EXTREMELY UNCOMFORTABLE DURING THE EXCHANGE.

MONEY TROUBLES FOR THE AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS

17. (C) RAMBAU SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION HAS NOT HAD SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH THE GOZ, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT THE CASE FOR A NUMBER OF AFRICAN EMBASSIES. THE FOREX SHORTAGE HAD RESULTED IN SEVERAL BANKS INTERPRETING GOZ REGULATIONS AS LIMITING THE FOREX THAT FOREIGN MISSIONS COULD ACCESS. THIS HAD BEEN A REAL PROBLEM FOR EMBASSIES AND PERSONNEL WHO SURVIVED ON DOLLAR TRANSFERS FROM HOME, AND WHO HAD NO INTEREST IN BUYING ZIMBABWE DOLLARS AT THE OFFICIAL 55 RATE OR WHO NEEDED U.S. CURRENCY FOR TRIPS HOME. A DELEGATION FROM THE AFRICAN GROUP HAD MET THE MFA PERMANENT SECRETARY TO COMPLAIN THAT THIS VIOLATING DIPLOMATIC NORMS. (THE ZAMBIAN DCM OBLIQUELY REFERRED THIS MEETING IN A SEPARATE

MEETING.) RAMBAU ASKED IF NON-AFRICAN MISSIONS HAD
ENCOUNTERED SIMILAR PROBLEMS. DCM ADMITTED THAT AS A
NEWCOMER HE DID NOT KNOW.

COMMENT

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18. (SBU) INITIAL MEETINGS WITH DIPLOMATS FROM ZIMBABWE'S
AFRICAN NEIGHBORS HAVE THUS FAR BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY A
FRANKNESS THAT WE FIND UNUSUAL. THEIR COMMENTS ARE MORE OR
LESS CONGRUENT WITH WHAT WE ARE HEARING FROM EUROPEAN AND
CANADIAN COLLEAGUES. RAMBAU BROKE LITTLE NEW GROUND,
ALTHOUGH IT WAS AMUSING TO HEAR HIS COMMENTS ON THE
DIFFICULTY OF SCRIPTING VISITING PARLIAMENTARIANS, HARDLY A
NEW PHENOMENON ELSEWHERE.

WHITEHEAD

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